



Letters & Notices

DAIRY HERD MANAGEMENT

Pan-European agreement on dry cow therapy

IN early 2017, as a group of seven bovine mastitis experts from throughout Europe, we met for a workshop in Wiesbaden hosted by Boehringer Ingelheim.

The objective for the workshop was to develop a consensus statement to:

- Provide guidance on the use of antibiotic dry cow therapy (ADCT), selective ADCT and internal teat sealant (ITS);
- Offer veterinary practitioners a reference for their recommendations and therefore, give them confidence in moving away from blanket ADCT; and
- Emphasise the responsible use of antibiotics at the time of drying off.

We believe this represents valuable guidance on dry cow therapy for the veterinary profession if implemented as outlined. It is also extremely timely for all vets and farmers who have concerns around the responsible use of antibiotics.

The agreed consensus statement is as follows:

- We recommend administering an ITS at drying off, to all cows, on all farms;
- Those animals that are likely to be infected need to receive ADCT in addition to ITS;
- At the herd level, farms should be classified as 'low risk' or 'high risk' with regards to udder health and the approach on these farms should be different;
- Ultimately, every herd is suitable for selective ADCT, but high-risk herds should go through a process of engagement with the farmer, and improve overall management and udder health; and
- Veterinarians should ensure

training of the farm staff on selective ADCT, and the appropriate and hygienic application of ITS.

The following consensus was reached on the definition of a high-risk herd:

- A bulk milk somatic cell count (SCC) of more than 250,000 cells/ml in two of the past six months;
- A herd with a *Streptococcus agalactiae* problem; and
- A herd experiencing exceptional unavoidable specific risk periods of mastitis.

In addition, the group proposes the following thresholds indicate that cows are likely infected with a major pathogen:

- Cows that have more than 200,000 cells/ml on at least one of the past three test days before dry off (the past test day needs to be scheduled within the four weeks before dry off in order to have optimal information); and
- Cows with clinical mastitis within the time frame of the past three test days before dry off.

These cows should therefore, be considered as candidates to be dried off with ADCT in addition to ITS. We understand individual SCC is only a proxy for intramammary infection, yet the information is generally readily at hand.

Andrew Bradley, Sarne De Vlieghe, Michael Farre, Luis Miguel Jimenez, Thomas Peters, Ellen Schmitt-van de Leemput, Tine van Werven, c/o Cedar Barn, Easton Hill, Easton, Wells BA5 1DU
e-mail: enquiries@qmms.co.uk

doi: 10.1136/vr.k2382



Pan-European bovine mastitis recommendations include administering an internal teat sealant with likely infected animals receiving additional antibiotic dry cow therapy. Recommendations also suggest farms should be classified as 'low risk' or 'high risk' in respect of udder health, with farms taking different risk-related approaches